

# THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND UNE RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

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As a University community, UNE desires a future where all Australians enjoy their rights, accept their responsibilities, and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. UNE, in making this statement on reconciliation, recognises the role that higher education institutions have in overcoming some of the disadvantage arising from the European occupation of Australia and the subsequent dispossession of the land of Indigenous Australians.

UNE acknowledges that Indigenous Australian people are the traditional custodians of the land upon which the University is built and that the consequences of the dispossession by European colonisation of this and of all other lands in Australia are still being felt within the Australian community.

In seeking to take forward a reconciliation process, the University commits itself to playing its part in promoting the rights of Indigenous Australians to equitable participation in the higher education sector.

In acknowledging that reconciliation must first engage the hearts and minds of members of our University community, UNE has undertaken many programs that seek to foster reconciliation but accepts that more needs to be done.

Accepting this responsibility, UNE will pursue its mission of teaching and learning, research and service in a spirit of true reconciliation. This statement itself demonstrates the University's commitment to creating an educational environment that is genuinely inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and experiences.

UNE will continue to develop a supportive organisational culture that values and respects Indigenous culture and accommodates cultural differences.

In consultation with Indigenous Australians, UNE will build on the work undertaken till now and will continue to seek innovative ways to implement the following strategies.

### **1. In teaching and learning, UNE will seek to:**

- 1.1. ensure that during all course reviews there is an inquiry as to Indigenous content;
- 1.2. ensure the integration of Indigenous perspectives into academic and administrative programs;
- 1.3. recruit Indigenous academic staff;
- 1.4. include a specific reference to an appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in

Graduate Attribute 7 on Social Responsibility; and

1.5. explore the viability of establishing a cross-faculty School of Indigenous Studies.

**2. In research, UNE will seek to:**

- 2.1. encourage appropriate and beneficial research of Indigenous issues;
- 2.2. develop policy guidelines to ensure that Indigenous-related research is conducted in accordance with relevant Indigenous protocols and ethical guidelines; and
- 2.3. support and mentor Indigenous academics to take advantage of external research funding opportunities.

**3. In community involvement and service, UNE will seek to:**

- 3.1. determine the University's role in promoting staff and student involvement in Indigenous events<sup>1</sup> and report annually on all such events to Council; and
- 3.2. determine the University's role in promoting Indigenous student employment and report annually to Council.

**4. In regard to internal structures, UNE will seek to:**

- 4.1. incorporate (a) an Indigenous cultural sensitivity course in the probation requirements for new academic staff and (b) approaches aimed at fostering sensitivity regarding service delivery to Indigenous students into its general staff induction;
- 4.2. as a minimum, meet the 2% Indigenous employment benchmark set for the Public Sector via the UNE Indigenous Employment Strategy process;
- 4.3. ensure that Indigenous engagement by the university is communicated to the general public via the web, annual reports and the like; and
- 4.4. ensure an acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples at university ceremonies and other public occasions via either (a) a *Welcome to Country* delivered by a local Indigenous Elder or (b) an agreed statement developed in consultation with local Indigenous community leaders and delivered by the university representative.<sup>2</sup>

**Reconciliation must be an on-going process of which this statement is part.**

**This statement will therefore be open to continuous review and amendment proposed either by the Council of the University of New England or the local Indigenous community and finalised via a consultative process.**

**The Council of the University of New England will ensure that the imbedding of the principles and actions set out above is made the responsibility of appropriate members of the University's senior management.**

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<sup>1</sup> This may be as disparate as an exhibition of Indigenous artefacts, seminars encouraging understanding of Indigenous spiritual beliefs, promoting Indigenous authors and composers or supporting attendance at the Indigenous Student Games.

<sup>2</sup> This could be as simple as the chair of the meeting opening with words "I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet."